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ABSTRACT

A six-week tour to study European broadcasting was planned for students interested in the various systems of broadcasting of different countries. Prior to the beginning of the tour, the group of 13 students met for four weeks to discuss the systems of the countries to be visited. After completing an examination and pointing up important lines of inquiry to more fully investigate, the group left for Europe. Broadcasting facilities and systems in London, Paris, Luxembourg, West Berlin, Munich, Vienna, Yugoslavia, and Switzerland were visited and studied. From time to time on the tour, the group met and discussed the broadcasting operations. After the tour each student prepared a written report of his thoughts and experiences. The study tour was judged to be a valuable experience in that it helped overcome prejudices against broadcasting in other countries, acquired first hand information concerning broadcasting in other countries, and allowed multiple exposure to peoples in a variety of social contexts. (SH)

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EUROPE IS OUR CAMPUS: A BROADCASTING STUDY TOUR SPONSORED BY OHIO STATE UNIVERSITY

Walter B. Emery

Under the auspices of the Department of Speech at Ohio State University I supervised a European broadcasting study tour during the spring quarter of 1971. Since I have received a large number of inquiries about it, and generally there appears to be considerable interest in this kind of educational travel, I am glad to describe the purposes of the tour, the procedure and the activities in which we participated and, as leader of the group, to report my reactions as to the educational values of the tour. Frankly, at the beginning, I had some misgivings, but after completing the trip, I was convinced that the students derived great educational benefit and that the academic credit they received was well justified.

There were thirteen students enrolled in the course, two juniors, six seniors, and five graduate students. Before permitting them to enroll, I interviewed the students carefully in terms of their academic records, their motivations, and the degrees of interest they expressed in making studies of comparative broadcasting and acquiring a real learning experience on the tour.

I discouraged several students who expressed an interest in the tour since, after consultation with them, it was agreed that it seemed better, at least at that time, for them to pursue other academic studies on the campus rather than spend six weeks in Europe.

Class Sessions Prior to the Tour

Prior to the beginning of the tour on April 30, I met with the group for four weeks, two hours a day, five days a week, and discussed with them the various systems of broadcasting in the countries we planned to visit; England, France, Luxembourg, West and East Germany, Austria, Yugoslavia and Switzerland. At the beginning of the course, I prepared a study outline of objectives and a selective bibliography relating to these systems, and asked the students to read the materials and be prepared to take a written examination prior to our departure.

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At each class session we made reports on our reading, and gave attention to the study of these broadcasting systems, as viewed in a historical and social context. While of course there is a limit to what students can learn in a short period (and I don't want to overestimate the knowledge they can acquire in four weeks), but the fact that they were expecting to observe and study first hand broadcasting operations in these countries was a motivating factor which, I believe, excited their interest and appeared to enhance their learning.

Participation in the Symposium on Global Broadcasting

Prior to our departure for Europe, I asked the students to attend and participate in the Symposium on Global Broadcasting which was held at the University on April 23, 24 and 25. They listened to distinguished researchers and broadcasting officials from different parts of the world, and participated in sectional meetings concerned with the problems of broadcast transmission and reception among countries. For several weeks preceding the Symposium, the students had been reading and discussing this subject, and their exposure to various points of view expressed by broadcasters from abroad provided additional knowledge, and whetted the interest of students in making the tour.

We Take Off for London

After completing the written examination and pointing up the important lines of inquiry which we wanted more fully to investigate, on April 30, we took off for London. There were about 200 students and faculty people from Ohio State University on the chartered flight, representing a variety of disciplines--communications, theatre, languages, economics, law, education, home economics, and numerous others.*

During the overseas flight, there was animated conversation among the students and faculty as they shared their ideas and their anticipation of visiting new places, seeing new people, and experiencing inter-cultural exchange.

I am glad to report that the flight across the Atlantic was comfortable, the food was good and the movies (rated GP) were satisfactory. I, as well as some other passengers, while the films were being shown, preferred to read and/or listen to recorded music made available through earphones.

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*The International Programs Office of the University sponsors many study tours, and the students and faculty on this flight represented numerous academic disciplines, including international broadcasting.

Broadcasting Studies in London

On May 1, the two hundred students and faculty people landed in London and the different groups fanned out in different directions to pursue their special interests and studies. For almost a year in advance, with the aid of the United States Information Agency and the State Department, and through correspondence with knowledgeable broadcasting officials and educators in this country and Europe, I had arranged a careful schedule for the broadcasting tour. Having spent a year in Europe in 1964-65 doing research on a book relating to broadcasting in Europe, including the systems which we were to study on the tour, I found it comparatively easy to make the necessary contacts and arrange a suitable schedule.

We spent the first week in London. The Honorable K. H. L. Lamb, Director of Public Affairs for the British Broadcasting Corporation, who had participated in our Symposium on Global Broadcasing at Ohio State University, went all out to have us visit the different departments of the BBC. He arranged a delightful luncheon for the group in the dining room of the Director-General and explained, in general, the organizational set-up of the BBC, giving us full opportunity for questions. He provided a detailed schedule for visits to important offices, studios, with opportunities to look in on rehearsals, and to observe the technical operations.

What is even more important, we were able to spend considerable time discussing administrative officials, program producers, news reporters and public relations people to get information as to how the BBC really operates, how its basic policies are actually implemented, what its problems are (this is a little difficult to find out, but we did some probing and made some discoveries).

During one afternoon, we visited the BBC Television Center. On another occasion we visited the radio facilities and took a look at the BBC Library which has one of the finest collections of broadcasting literature in Europe. We discovered that many American students use these library facilities for research, particularly for theses pertaining to the mass media in England and other countries in Europe.

The Overseas Broadcast Service of the BBC is probably the finest system of international broadcasting in the world. We spent a whole afternoon listening to several officials explain the operations of the service, how it is that the operations have achieved a high degree of creditability for listeners throughout

the world, what strategies they use (they don't like the word, strategy; to them it connotes propaganda) in reporting the news and how they deal with important controversial issues.

On another day, we talked with the officials who are in charge of the so-called Open University recently initiated by the BBC. This is a new, experimental program which provides listeners with an opportunity to study various subjects at home, and by paying fees and passing examinations receive university academic credit.

Of special interest was a lecture on what the BBC is doing to supplement and aid instruction in the classroom. The speaker presented some film excerpts illustrating some of the typical programs which have been used by the public schools. Since our students were well informed as to the uses of radio and TV in education in the United States, there was a lively exchange of opinion as to the comparative merits of instructional broadcasting in the two countries.

Added to our BBC visits, was a trip to an educational center financed by the London schools which is using cable TV systems to transmit formal instruction in a number of subjects. Also, we spent an afternoon visiting Thames Television, which is the commercial station in London and which is a part of a commercial network that provides coverage throughout England. The students listened to a lecture by the head of public affairs programming and were able to compare the points of view of BBC, which is noncommercial, and ITV which is commercial.

A Visit to Paris to Study French Broadcasting

Following a week of study, we travelled to Paris where we spent several days studying Radio Television Francaise and the Paris facilities of Radio Luxembourg. RTF is largely a monopoly and noncommercial (recently, it started broadcasting a small amount of advertising on TV). An official in charge of international relations gave us a lecture explaining the organization of RTF and its functions, the nature of its programming and the control of its operations. There was a follow-up period for questions and answers. The students were particularly concerned to know how the news and public issues were handled by a monopolistic system so closely controlled by the government, as

distinguished by a private system in the United States. The following day, we interviewed the news writers and reporters and probed further to learn more about the journalistic operations of RTF.

The Maison de la RTF, which houses most of the offices and studios of RTF, is a magnificent structure of functional, circular design. In addition to these facilities, it has concert halls from which the RTF Orchestra, one of the finest in Europe, broadcasts programs for both listeners in France and in other countries. We spent a day visiting the building, aided by courteous guides and officials explaining the technical and programming operations. As was the case with BBC, RTF gave us admission to a number of studios to see and hear different programs on the air.

Radio Luxembourg does not have transmitters in France, but does have a large recording establishment in Paris. These news and musical programs are recorded in the Paris studios and transmitted via cable to Luxembourg, which in turn broadcasts the programs to France and to other European countries. The students spent an afternoon studying these facilities and operations, and some students seemed to be fascinated with the art and skill of the announcers and news reporters and the "disc jockeys" who are said to be the best in the world.

The Grand Duchy and Radio Luxembourg

Our tour, quite logically, took us to Luxembourg to visit the main offices and studios of Radio Luxembourg, recognized as the "Station of the Stars", because for forty years it has been featuring celebrated, outstanding talent on its broadcasts. Located in the charming Villa Louvigny, the station achieves wide coverage and with its news and light music attracts many listeners in many countries in Europe. We spent a day listening to lectures of administrative, programming and sales executives explaining the nature of the operations. Having had some historical knowledge concerning Radio Luxembourg, the students were interested to learn why the program format of the station had changed so radically since the Second War. Whereas, formerly the programs consisted of educational features and classical music, it now consists largely of spot news and light, popular music. This precipitated a lively discussion among the students and personnel of the station.

Visits to West and East Berlin

Our schedule next took us to West and East Berlin. The broadcasting authorities in West Berlin gave us a warm and enthusiastic reception. Sender Freies, the television station in West Berlin, arranged for a symposium for exchange of ideas and opinions. The program director in charge explained at length how the system of broadcasting in West Germany had changed--whereas previous to the War, all broadcasting control was centralized under the Hitler regime, the control was now diversified among the Lander with local autonomy and greater freedom for programming. The students were much impressed with the housing, studios and transmitting equipment. Even more, they were impressed with programming personnel and the quality of programs on both television and radio.

As a group, we took a guided tour in East Berlin. Unfortunately, however, we were not permitted to talk with the broadcasting authorities. I had corresponded long in advance, hoping that we might look in on their broadcasting operations. I finally got an answer to my letters and a cable, but the answer was no. There was no explanation. They did say they were "sorry." No doubt the political situation at the time militated against our visit. Needless to say, the students were interested and dismayed by the negative response and by refusal of access to broadcasting facilities in this authoritarian regime. This was a real, meaningful experience for the students.

Before leaving West Berlin, we spent an afternoon visiting the studios of Radio in the American Sector (RIAS) which is owned and operated by the United States Information Agency. This station with a staff of almost five hundred, presents a wide variety of programming and is heard by many listeners in West and East Germany. We spent two hours with officials discussing the nature of the operation, and had a look in on a variety program in progress, designed largely for young people which, we learned, is a very popular program in East Germany.

A Visit to Munich

From Berlin we travelled to Munich where we spent three days visiting Byerischer Rundfunk, Radio Free Europe and the U. S. Armed Services Radio. Bayerischer Rundfunk, one of the larger stations in West Germany is comparable in facilites to Sender Freies

in West Berlin. Radio Free Europe (RFE) is a private American network of five stations broadcasting to the Communist countries of Eastern Europe. We spent an afternoon talking with program officials and looking over the establishment which has a sizeable building and elaborate studios and a large staff. In the discussion with officials, the students learned that eighty-four million people live in the five countries which can be heard by RFE, and officials estimated more than half the families in these countries have sets capable of receiving programs, and that from thirty-five to fifty-six percent, depending on the country, listen regularly to these programs. I was pleased that some of the students were well informed as to survey techniques and asked good questions as to the basis of these estimates. Also, the students raised questions as to how RFE was financed. Printed literature of RFE in earlier years had given the impression that funds came from private sources only. However, it is now generally known that the Central Intelligence Agency (CIA) contributes a substantial amount to the support of the operation. The students wanted to know the facts, but the response was that these matters were confidential. Needless to say, the students were not happy with this response.

Interestingly enough, the Armed Services Radio which we visited in Munich one afternoon, produced a very good image. This service provides a variety of programming (much music and news) and is popular among listeners throughout Germany. The officials seemed to be much more accessible to us than those at RFE, and talked more freely regarding the operation and its budget and control. One of the announcers in uniform, in uninhibited fashion, gave us a description of the programs and his evaluation of the radio service. He said he was expecting soon to finish his military duties, ~~and asked about our graduate program at Ohio State University. Naturally this perked up our interest and I must admit that we made a "sales pitch" for our graduate program.~~ and hoped to do graduate work in broadcasting on his return to the United States.

A Trip to Vienna and a Study of Austrian Broadcasting

Our trip took us to beautiful Vienna to study Austrian broadcasting. There we had one of the most complete tours of any broadcasting establishment that we visited. In fact, the explanations by learned engineers were so long and tedious that we got the feeling that they were more concerned about "hardware" rather than "software" in broadcasting. However, this was offset

somewhat by enlightened discussions by some of the program producers and by some of the excellent radio and TV programs which we monitored in Vienna.

Broadcasting Studies in Yugoslavia

We spent three days in Belgrade. Dr. Ivko Pustisek, Secretary General of Yugoslav Radiotelevision, who shortly before we arrived had lectured at the OSU Symposium on Global Broadcasting, gave us a cordial reception. He took us on a walking tour of some interesting parts of the city and, with interpreters, took us through a historical museum that gave us an exciting study of the history of Yugoslavia. This helped correct some myths and misunderstandings of this country with its prolonged history of cultural conflicts and its suffering from oppression and travail.

In several meetings with Dr. Pustisek and other officials in charge of broadcasting in Belgrade, the students soon learned, that while Yugoslavia is a Communist country, as far as broadcasting is concerned it is quite different in the Soviet Union and some other Eastern countries of Europe. Actually, the control in broadcasting is quite similar to West Germany. It operates largely at the regional and local level. The Federal government has encouraged diversification of control among the nationalities and cultural groups, and a great deal of indigenous programming is carried on by stations in the republics and numerous autonomous regional groups. The students made special note of the fact that stations have considerable autonomy and are subject to much less control and restraints from the Federal government than they had thought before coming to visit Belgrade.

The Climax of the Tour: A Visit to Switzerland

Switzerland was the last country we visited. We spent several days in Berne, the Capital. Of particular interest was a visit to the Parliament. We spent some time in both houses, and the students were much interested and impressed with the dignity and formality of the proceedings and were intrigued with the diversified linguistic and cultural make-up (French, German, Italian) of the Parliament. Swiss Broadcasting maintains offices and studios in the Capital building. We took a tour of these facilities, and listened to a lecture on how the news pertaining to actions of the

Parliament is broadcast and how some sessions are broadcast directly from the two chambers while debate is in progress.

The Swiss short-wave broadcasting service is one of the most important in Europe. The service includes broadcasts in more than twenty languages. We were privileged to listen to a lecture with audio-visual aids, presented by the director in charge of foreign broadcasting, discussing the philosophy of the overseas service (objectivity and neutrality are stressed), graphically explaining the global dimensions of coverage and the reactions to listeners throughout the world.

Following this lecture, the students took a tour of the offices and studios, and five of the students and three of the officials participated in a panel discussion. The thirty minute conversation was recorded and later broadcast by short-wave to North American listeners.

We wound up our official tour with visits to the European Broadcasting Union and the International Telecommunication Union in Geneva. EBU maintains a European TV network and the students spent several hours learning first hand about the operations and observing transmissions and the nature and quality of the network programs.

We also visited the offices of the ITU building and heard a lecture on the purposes of the organization, its functions concerning allocation of broadcast frequencies for broadcasting throughout the world, its research functions, and its various other activities concerned with global communications.

Discussion Sessions on the Tour and Written Reports

From time to time on the tour, the group met and discussed the broadcasting operations, made comparisons and attempted to evaluate the effectiveness of these systems as reflected by the various and often conflicting ideas and viewpoints expressed by different officials. At the conclusion of the tour, we spent two hours attempting to summarize the highlights of the trip, and each student attempted to state what particular benefits he had derived from the experience.

At each place we visited, the students picked up informational materials relating to the various broadcasting systems. I

asked each student to prepare a written report and essay on his reading materials and his experiences and turn these in to me for evaluation.

Ten Days of Leisure

Following the conclusion of our formal schedule of broadcasting studies, the students were on their own and could travel at leisure at their own expense. Some visited in Italy, others returned to Germany, one visited as far as Algeria, and others remained in Switzerland. All returned on June 16, either in Paris or London, and, along with other study groups, we took the charter flight and landed in Columbus the next day, greeted by a host of friends, students, colleagues, and others, who extended us a warm welcome.

Other Enriching, Educational Experiences

So far, my report has been concerned largely with our studies of radio and TV, but other enriching, educational experiences should not be overlooked. There was free time for recreational diversions. Depending on their particular interests, students visited such places as Westminister Abbey, St. Pauls Cathedral, Tower of London, British Museum, Hyde Park in London to mention only a few; the Louvre, the Eiffel Tower, the National Library, Notre Dame, Montmartre, the art galleries on the Left Bank, ~~and~~ Versailles, ~~the~~ and numerous other places of historical and cultural interest in Paris and nearby; the Schonbrunn Palace where the Kennedy-Kruschev meeting was held and was transmitted via television throughout the world; the Spanish Riding School, the famous Opera House, and other exciting places in Vienna; a world renowned historical museum in Belgrade; the historic Hofbrau House in Munich with its German folk music and where Hitler and his cronies frequently held forth when he was on the rise in the Reich; and the gruesome Berlin Wall, one of the highest television towers in the world in East Berlin which at the top striking rays of the sun produces a cross, and about which the Communists have been much annoyed because they have been unable to erace the image.

Meeting People in Other Countries

One of the greatest values from the trip was meeting and learning about new people in other countries and cultures, how they think and speak, how they dress and behave, on the streets, on the busses and trains, in homes, in the stores, etc.

There were the austere looks of the police in East Germany and the wan and dejected faces of old men and women in East Berlin, separated from loved ones and with sad memories. Some of our group will not forget an experience we had when we were travelling on the train in East Germany. Two elderly women sitting near us sat silently, despite our attempts to get them to talk. They looked frightened and apprehensive. But once we crossed the border into West Germany they began to talk freely. They explained that they lived in East Berlin and, being old, they were permitted to visit relatives in West Germany, but while in the East zone, they were under surveillance and had to be careful to avoid any conversation that might be heard or reported that might displease the police. "To get out of East Berlin," said one of the old ladies (eighty-three years old), "its like having a great stone rolled away."

But there were happy and friendly faces in many places. In most cities we visited, one was free to walk the streets without fear or molestation. In some cities--Luxembourg, Vienna, Berne--you seldom saw a policeman.

We were fortunate to visit in a magnificent home of a wealthy Swiss cheesemanufacturer in Berne, Switzerland. He and his family then took us to a wonderful Swiss restaurant and we enjoyed one of the finest meals we ever had.

Recreational Activities

There were dinners and picnics in honor of some students who had birthdays. There was an opera in Munich, a look in on a rehearsal of the Luxembourg Symphony Orchestra, a number of visits to the theatre; and we saw some American movies with sub-titles in Belgrade with the price of admission only thirty cents in American money (with the hard seats and small screens and the ghastly decor, we could understand the low price).

There Were Some Problems

It was fatiguing at times to transport luggage from one city to another. We had the nervous tremors when one student almost lost his luggage and almost missed the train. We had stern looks from the German police when they scrutinized our visas and held up the train to inspect more carefully the visa of one of our students from Saudi Arabia. We had to cool our heels for two hours in the Yugoslavia airport because the travel agency, for some reason, thought our trip had been cancelled. We had visions of possible incarceration in a Communist country, all of which were unfounded.

Despite these minor problems and setbacks, the group developed splendid rapport and my wife and I were impressed with the behavior of the students. We felt that the group reflected a good image of American students. All in all, the tour was a grand, exciting, educational experience. As one writer has said, "The World is Our Campus," and we covered quite a lot of the campus in six weeks.

Values of the Study Tour

The students thought that the primary values of the study tour were:

1. Helped overcome prejudices against broadcasting in other countries, and acquired a better understanding of its problems and accomplishments.

2. Acquired first hand information regarding broadcasting in other countries, and gained some valuable ideas and information from practitioners abroad that may be helpful in the improvement of broadcasting in the United States.

3. The advantage of multiple exposure to peoples in a variety of social contexts, their points of view, how they behave, what they think of us, and the resulting greater interest in the promotion of cultural exchange through mass media and other means.